

A Detailed Guide to One-Character Verbs in Mandarin

The following is a comprehensive outline of 90 per cent of the advanced one-character verbs you'll encounter in written and spoken Mandarin.

Beginner Level: Simple Verbs with Secondary Meanings

- 想 xiǎng – 1. to think 2. to believe 3. to miss
- 念 niàn and 读 dú – 1. to read 2. to study, e.g. 念书 and 读书.
- 得 dé – 1. to receive 2. to contract an illness 3. to have had enough, e.g. 得了吧! (Stop it!) 4. 得 dēi – have to
- 属 shǔ – to be born in a year of one of the Chinese zodiac, e.g. 我属兔。(I was born in the year of the rabbit.)
- 点 diǎn – 1. to point; to poke 2. to mention 3. order (food, drinks, etc)
- 敢 gǎn – to dare 你敢! (Don't you dare!)
- 说 shuō – 1. to speak 2. to criticise 不是我说你。(I don't mean to pay you out, but...)
- 来 lái – 1. to come 2. to bring 请来两杯水。(Could I have two bottles of water please?)
- 去 qù – 1. to go 2. to go away 去死!
- 上 shàng – 1. to board (a vehicle) or make use of a machine 我上火车去工作。(I take the train to work.) 上楼梯。(Take the stairs.) 2. to go to 我去上个厕所。(I'm off to the loo.) 3. to go to school 你在这个学校上吗? (Do you go here?)
- 开 kāi – 1. to open 我把门开了。(I opened the door.) 2. to drive 我开的很好。(I'm a good driver.) 3. to wipe (Northern slang) 我开了婴儿的屁股。(I wiped the baby's bottom.)
- 关 guān – 1. to close 我把窗户关了。(I closed the windows.) 2. to turn off (machine, light, etc) 把灯关了。(I turned off the light.) 3. to close down 工厂关了。(The factory's closed down.) 4. to lock up 把他关起来! (Lock him up!)
- 走 zǒu – 1. to walk 人在路上走。(People are walking on the road.) 2. to leave 他已经走了。(He's already left.)
- 像 xiàng – to be like; to resemble 他很像你。(He looks like you.)
- 信 xìn – 1. to believe 2. to believe in; to have faith in 3. to trust
- 选 xuǎn – to choose
- 打 dǎ – 1. to hit 2. to call 3. to play 4. many additional meanings, especially in compounds
- 记 jì – 1. to remember 2. to record

Intermediate Level: Tricky Verbs and Verbs with Multiple Meanings

- 看 – kàn to look (same as 瞧 qiáo) – kān to look after 我帮他看孩子。(I helped him babysit the kids.)
- 让 ràng – 1. to let 2. to make someone do something 3. to throw a match 比赛中, 我比你厉害, 但我让你。(During the match he was better than me but I let him win.) 4.

to give in to someone' s argument 吵架的时候，他总是让着他老婆。(When he and his wife fight he always gives in to her.)

- 火 huǒ (noun: fire) – 1. to be famous 他火得厉害。(He' s very famous.) 2. to get angry 他火大了。(He flared up.)
- 穿 chuān – 1. to wear 衣服太小了，我穿不下去。(The clothes are too small, I can' t wear them.) 2. to pierce; to pass through 请把珠链穿起来。(Please thread the beads together.)
- 碰 pèng – 1. to encounter; to bump in to; to run into 2. to try one' s luck; to take one' s chances 碰碰运气吧。(To try your luck.)
- 催 cuī – to urge
- 劝 quàn – to advise
- 吹 chuī – 1. to blow 2. to boast 3. to break up
- 倒 dǎo – 1. to fall down 2. -- (Internet slang)
- 晕 yūn – 1. to faint 2. -- (Internet slang)
- 汗 hàn – 1. to sweat 2. -- (Internet slang)
- 掉 diào – 1. to lose 2. to drop
- 落 luò/là – 1. to drop 2. to leave something behind 别落东西。(Make sure you' ve got everything.)
- 退 tuì – 1. to retreat 2. to give back 3. to refund
- 靠 kào – 1. to rely on 2. to fuck
- 踩 cǎi – 1. to step on 2. to make a simple comment on a blog/post
- 刺 cì – 1. to stab 2. to sting
- 撒 sǎn – 1. to scatter 2. to loose – sǎn to say goodbye
- 下 xià – 1. to go offline 我下了。(I' m off.)
- 刮 guā – 1. to scrape 2. to shave 3. to scrub
- 留 liú – 1. to stay 2. to leave something alone 3. to leave a message
- 派 pài – to dispatch; to send; to instruct 我派他做点事。(I instructed him to do something.)
- 发 fā – 1. to send 2. to make a fortune
- 占 zhàn – 1. to occupy 2. to make up; to constitute
- 指 zhǐ – 1. to point 2. to refer to
- 完 wán – 1. to finish 2. to be hopeless
- 吵 chǎo – to quarrel; to argue; to be noisy 别吵啦。(Don' t argue.)
- 服 fú – to give in 好啦，我服了。(Okay, I give in.)
- 乘 chéng – 1. to board 他乘的是384航班。(He boarded flight 384.) 2. to multiply 2乘3等于6。(Two times three is six.)
- 转 zhuǎn – 1. to turn around 2. to change direction 3. to transfer
- 骂 mà – to yell at; to swear at
- 算 suàn – 1. to be considered 2. to calculate 3. to predict 我昨天就算到他一定来。(Yesterday I predicted he would come.)
- 陪 péi – to accompany; to keep company
- 怪 guài [adjective: strange] – to blame

- 抄 chāo – 1. to copy 不要抄你同学的作业。(Don't copy your classmates' work.) 2. to use (in different collocations) 抄近路。(Take a shortcut.) 抄家伙。(Take your weapons out.)
- 插 chā – 1. to insert 2. to stab 3. to fuck
- 拖 tuō – 1. to drag 2. to delay; to postpone; to procrastinate
- 含 hán – 1. to contain 2. to keep/have in the mouth
- 赖 lài – 1. to rely on; to depend on 2. to falsely accuse; to set someone up 3. to blame
- 喂 wèi [interjection: hello] – to feed
- 逛 guàng – to stroll; to window-shop
- 挎 kuà – to link arms
- 盼 pàn – to look forward to 我天天盼着你来。(I think about you coming back to me every day.) 我盼着我的儿子早结婚。(I look forward to my son getting married young.)
- 驻 zhù – to be based in 他是ABC驻北京记者。(He is an ABC correspondent based in Beijing.)

Advanced Level: Colloquial Verbs and Slang

- 图 tú – to hope to gain 住学校我图上班近。(By living at school I gain the benefit of being near my workplace.) 他总是图便宜买地摊货。(He always buy stuff from the market because it's cheap.) 你图什么? (What are you hoping to gain from this?)
- 瞎 xiā – to waste; to squander 他瞎了这个昂贵的布料。(He ruined the luxurious fabric.)
- 蒙 mēng – 1. to deceive; to trick 2. to make a wild guess 知道就说知道, 不知道你可别瞎蒙。(If you know, you know – if you don't, you gotta make a wild guess.)
- 混 hùn 1. to be busy doing something 你混得怎么样? (What you been up to lately?) 2. to drift (usually through life) 最近瞎混。(Just been stuffin' around.) 他每天不工作, 就在家混日子。(He never works, just bums around at home.)
- 惯 guàn – to spoil; to tolerate; to indulge 别惯他的臭毛病。(Don't put up with his bad habits.)
- 撑 chēng – 1. to open (umbrella, parasol, etc) 把它撑开。(Open it up.) 2. to be full/stuffed 我撑死了。(I'm stuffed.) 3. to put up with 我快撑不住了。(I can't take it anymore.)
- 支 zhī – to physically support 请把它支起来。(Please hold it up.)
- 疼 téng – 1. to be in pain 我的头疼。(I got a headache.) 2. to dote on 妈妈很疼他。(Mum dotes on him.)
- 管 guǎn – 1. to be in charge of 这里是谁管的? (Who's in charge here?) 2. to have jurisdiction over 重庆不归四川管了。(Chongqing will not fall under the jurisdiction of Sichuan again.) 3. to discipline 张老师把这个班管得很好。(Mr Zhang disciplines his class well.) 4. to interfere 我的事儿你别管。(Mind your own business.) 5. to care 他不管有没有说明书, 就把药给吃了。(Without caring if there were any instructions, he swallowed the pill.) 6. to guarantee 我只管卖, 不管好不好用。(I'm just the seller, I

can't guarantee if it works or not.) 7. to look after 无论发生什么，我都会我管你的。(No matter what happens I'll look after you.)

- 害 hài - 1. to put in harm's way; to jeopardise 别害他。(Don't put him in harm's way.) 2. to cause something bad to happen 你没来，害得我等了一个小时。(I had to wait a whole hour because you didn't show up.)
- 挂 guà - 1. to hang 墙上挂着画。(There's a painting hanging on the wall.) 2. to fail 考试挂了。(I flunked my exam.) 3. to die
- 整 zhěng - 1. to do (Northern slang) 你怎么整的？(How do you do it?) 可咋整啊？(What are we going to do?)
- 栽 zāi - 1. to plant 我今天栽了两棵树。(I planted two trees today.) 2. to fail; to beat someone 我栽了。(I failed.) 我栽在你手里了。(You beat me.)
- 闪 shǎn - 1. to flash 2. to move suddenly 闪人！(Let's go!)
- 擎 qíng - 1. to hold up with one's hands 2. to wait without doing anything (Beijing dialect) 擎等着。(Wait around.)
- 掐 qiā - 1. to pinch 2. to quarrel; to fight 他们掐起来。(They started to have a row.)
- 配 pèi - 1. to be a match; to be qualified to do sth 你和你男朋友不配。(You and your boyfriend are not right together.) 他配不上你。(He's not good enough for you.) 你不配当经理。(You don't have what it takes to be a manager.)
- 毁 huǐ - to ruin 他毁了我们的婚姻。(He ruined our marriage.)
- 误 wù - 1. to miss 我误了火车。(I missed my train.) 2. to ruin 他误了我的一生。(He ruined my life.)
- 猫 māo (noun: cat) - to hide 你猫在哪儿？(Where are you hiding?)
- 嚷 rǎng - to shout 你嚷什么？(What are you shouting about?)
- 分 fēn - 1. to divide 把西瓜分了。(Divide up the watermelon.) 2. to break up; to separate 我们已经分了很久了。(We've already been broken up for a while.)
- 废 fèi - 1. to injury someone badly 把他废了。(I disabled him.) 2. to be ruined beyond repair 车废了。(The car is beyond repair.) 3. to be useless 他人废了。(He's useless.)
- 甩 shuǎi - 1. to shake off 他甩了甩汗。(He shook off his sweat.) 2. to dump 他把我甩了。(He dumped me.)
- 蹬 dēng - 1. to step 2. to dump
- 摇 yáo - 1. to shake 2. to rock
- 耍 shuǎ - 1. to have fun 2. to trick 3. to make friends (dialect) 耍朋友。
- 泡 pào - 1. to submerge; to immerse in water 泡点儿茶。(Make some tea.) 2. to make fun of
- 怵 chù - 1. to be unwilling to do something because it's too challenging 2. to be scared of 我什么人都不怵。(I'm not scared of anyone.)
- 冲 chōng - 1. rinse 2. flush 3. recharge 4. charge/collide 5. develop a film
- 闯 chuǎng - to storm; to rush in; to break in 警察闯进了房间。(The police stormed into the room.)
- 鸟 diǎo - 1. to talk to somebody 他不鸟我。(He's not talking to me.)
- 揍 zòu - to beat 我要揍你。(I'll go you.)
- 踢 tī - 1. to kick 2. to kick out 3. to play (soccer) 4. to dump

- 屯 tún - 1. to store 他们在仓库屯了很多东西。(They store a lot of things at the warehouse.) 2. to station (troops)
- 吞 tūn - 1. to swallow 2. to swallow up 谷歌吞并了摩托罗拉公司。(Google bought out Motorola.) 3. to take away 我把钱吞掉了。(I took all the money away.) 4. 你得吞下这颗苦果。(You've made your bed and now you must lie in it.)
- 饶 ráo - to spare someone's life 我求求你了，饶了我吧。(I beg you, spare me!)
- 蹲 dūn - 1. to squat 2. to stay at home
- 宅 zhái - to stay at home
- 浮 fú - 1. to float 2. to drift (usually through life)
- 逢 féng - to meet 他雅思得了四个7，高兴极了，逢人便说。(He got four 7s for his IELTS and was so happy that he told every one he met.)
- 绑 bǎng - 1. bind; to tie up 快把他绑起来！(Tie him up!) 2. to kidnap
- 拐 guǎi - 1. to turn 2. to kidnap 他被外星人拐走了。(He was abducted by aliens.)
- 扔 rēng - 1. throw 2. to leave 别扔下我不管。(Don't just leave me out in the cold.) 3. to forget 我的法语早扔了。(I've forgotten all my French.)
- 揉 róu - 1. to rub 2. to knead dough
- 挤 jǐ - to squeeze 他从牙缝挤出来就够我活了。(The money he can pick out of his teeth would be enough for me to live.)
- 拷 1. kǎo to handcuff 2. kǎo to copy 拷给我一份。(Make me a copy.) 3. kǎo to call
- 论 lùn - 1. to argue 我想跟他论一论。(I'd like to challenge him.) 2. to talk about; to discuss 我们论事不论人。(We're just discussing the issue, it's nothing personal.) 3. to value 我们论能力，不论学历。(We value ability, not academic achievement.)
- 轮 lún - 1. to go around 轮到你了。(It's your turn.) 2. to wave around 他把一把刀轮起来。(He waved the knife around.)
- 掰 bāi - 1. to say goodbye 2. to break off a friendship
- 扁 biǎn [adj: flat] - to beat; to strike 兄弟们，扁他！(Bros - get him!)
- 搓 cuō - 1. to rub 2. to do something 咱们搓一顿吧。(Let's grab a bite to eat.) 他们正在搓麻将。(They're playing mahjong.)
- 顶 dǐng - 1. to carry on the head 2. to approve; to support (Internet slang)
- 过 guò - 1. to spend 2. to be extreme/excessive 3. to pass (an exam)
- 顺 shùn [adj: smooth] - to walk off with something; to shoplift
- 卡 kǎ - 1. to block; to be stuck 他被门卡住了。(He got stuck in the door.) 2. to be hard to pass 雅思卡人卡得厉害！(IELTS is a nightmare!)
- 装 zhuāng - 1. to install 2. to pretend 本来就是狼，何必要装羊。(If you're a wolf, what's the use in pretending to be a sheep?)
- 背 bèi - to memorise - bēi to carry on one's back; to piggyback
- 黑 hēi - 1. to trick 我被人黑了。(I've been tricked.) 2. to hack 网站被黑了。(The website's been hacked.)
- 翻 fān - 1. to turn over 2. to translate
- 夹 jiá - 1. fold 2. slam
- 盖 gài - 1. to cover 妈妈会给你盖好的。(Mum will tuck you in.) 太冷了，你要盖好被子。(It's freezing - stay under the doona.) 2. to surpass; to exceed 在《水浒传》

中，宋江的功劳盖了晁盖。(In Water Margin Song Jiang's contribution exceeded that of Chao Gai.)

- 逼 bī - to force 我的父母把我逼上绝路。(My parents have backed me into a corner.)
- 涮 shuàn - 1. to rinse 2. to make fun of (old-fashioned) 他涮咱们呢，别信他的话。(He's making fun of us, don't believe what he says.)
- 侃 kǎn - to talk a lot 他这个人很能侃。(He sure talks a lot.)
- 砍 kǎn - 1. to cut down 2. to cut 他砍到我手了！(He cut my hand!)
- 挟 xié - 1. hold under one's arm (夹住) 2. coerce (挟制) 3. harbour (心怀)
- 眯 mī - 1. squint 2. take a nap
- 脱 tuō - 1. to take off clothing 2. to get away with 如果我们被抓了，你也脱不了关系。(If we get caught, there's no way you can get out of it.)
- 掖 yē - 1. to support somebody by one's arm; to tuck in; to thrust in between 2. help; assist
- 抱 bào - 1. carry in one's arms 2. adopt; hold 3. cherish 4. hang out 5. hatch
- 爆 bào - 1. to explode 2. to fuck 我把他菊花爆了。(I fucked him up the arse.)
- 系 jì - 1. to tie up; to fasten 请把你的安全带系上。(Please put your seat belt on.) 2. xì to be 毛泽东系湖南人。(Mao Zedong is from Hunan.)
- 抽 chōu - 1. to take out 2. to smoke 3. to find (time) 4. to release 5. to shrink/contract 6. to pump out
- 封 fēng - to seal 把那个窗户封死。(Seal the window up.)
- 聚 jù - 1. to gather; to congregate 我们今天在学校聚一聚。(We met up at school today.)
- 奔 bèn - to run in a hurry 他刚奔出去。(He just rushed out.)
- 圆 yuán - 1. to make round 2. to justify; to explain 她的故事圆不上了。(Her story is inexplicable.) 3. to make a reality (e.g. a dream) 他圆了她的梦。(She made her dream come true.)
- 守 shǒu - 1. to guard 2. to be with for a long time 她守着残疾的丈夫过了二十年。(She stayed by her disabled husband's side for 20 years.)
- 受 shòu - 1. to tolerate 我受不了。(I can't take it anymore.) 2. to enjoy 这部电影很受欢迎。(This movie is very popular [lit. "enjoys popularity"].) 偶爸妈很受爱戴。(Obama has garnered much support [lit. "enjoys love and support"].) 观音菩萨极其灵验，广受香火。(The Goddess of Mercy answers people's prayers and is widely worshipped [lit. "widely enjoys incense"].)
- 爬 pá - 1. to climb 2. to crawl
- 炒 chǎo - 1. stir-fry 2. to dismiss; to fire; to sack 3. to invest heavily and make prices go up 去年的澳洲房价高涨当地媒体说都是外国投资者炒起来。(The media have said that the reason house prices in Australia went up last year was due to overseas buyers flooding the market.)
- 怨 yuàn - to blame
- 惹 rě - to provoke; to stir up 谁惹起这件事？(Who started it?) 他总喜欢惹人注意。(He likes to attract attention.) 别惹乱子。(Don't stir up trouble.) 他这个人很惹人厌。(He's a nuisance.)

- 招 zhāo - 1. to beckon 2. to provoke; to stir up 3. to recruit
- 驳 bó - to refute 我驳不倒他。(I can't prove him wrong.)
- 补 bǔ - 1. to supplement 2. to mend; to patch up; to repair
- 躲 duǒ - 1. to hide 2. to avoid 3. to dodge 他躲过了子弹。(He dodged a bullet.) 我们躲过了一场灾难。(We managed to escape from the disaster.)
- 藏 cáng - 1. to hide something or someone; to harbour 2. to store
- 缴 jiǎo - 1. to pay money 2. to hand in
- 订 dìng - 1. to order 2. to book; to reserve
- 丢 diū - 1. to lose 2. to throw 3. to litter
- 许 xǔ - 1. to allow; to permit 2. to promise
- 漏 lòu - 1. to leak 2. to reveal; to leak information
- 勾 gōu - 1. to seduce 2. to evoke 他说的话勾起了我的回忆。(What he said brought back some memories.) 3. to tick 把它勾掉。(Tick it off.)
- 抢 qiǎng - 1. to mug; to steal 他抢了我钱包。(He mugged me and took my wallet.) 2. to rob 他抢了银行。(He robbed the bank.) 3. to scramble for; to vie for; to rush for 我们抢着做刷碗。(We both insisted on washing the dishes.) 4. to yank; to grab
- 挣 zhēng 1. to scramble for; to vie for; to rush for 2. to open 把袋子挣开。(Open your bag.) - zhèng to earn money 我今天挣了30。(Today I earned thirty bucks.)
- 免 miǎn - 1. to avoid 2. to exempt; to excuse
- 欠 qiàn - 1. to owe 2. to lack 他做事欠妥当。(He doesn't do things properly.) 3. to move forward slightly (to adjust the position of one's body)
- 戒 jiè - to abstain from; give up; to quit 他戒烟了。(He quit smoking.) 她戒酒了。(She gave up drinking.)
- 养 yǎng - 1. to bring up; to cultivate; to raise 他养花，养狗，也养鱼，但还没养过孩子。(He cultivates flowers, raises dogs and he's even got some fish, but he's never brought up any children.) 2. to support 父母赚钱养你不容易。(It's not easy for your parents to earn enough money to support you.)
- 领 lǐng - 1. to lead; to guide 2. to receive 每个月你领了多少工资？(How much salary do you get each month?)
- 宰 zǎi - 1. to slaughter; to butcher 2. to be ripped off 你被宰了。(You were ripped off.)
- 离 lí - to divorce 我们俩离了。(We're divorced.)
- 架 jià - to take someone away forcibly 把他架出去。(Kick him out.)
- 抓 zhuā - 1. to scratch 2. to grab 3. to grope; to fondle 他抓了她的胸。(He groped her breasts.) 4. to catch 5. to arrest
- 编 biān - 1. to weave 2. to make a list 3. to edit
- 持 chí - 1. to hold 2. to manage
- 传 chuán - 1. to pass on 2. to spread 3. to transmit
- 带 dài - 1. to carry 2. to lead 3. to bring up
- 告 gào - 1. to tell 2. to announce 3. to sue
- 集 jí - 1. to collect 2. to gather
- 理 lǐ - 1. to take notice of 2. to manage 3. to realise

- 连 lián - 1. to join 2. continue
- 求 qiú - 1. to beg for 2. to seek
- 容 róng - 1. to tolerate 2. to allow
- 赛 sài - 1. to race 2. to rival
- 砸 zá - to smash 我用锤子砸他的头。(I smashed his head in with a hammer.)
- 追 zhuī - 1. to chase 2. to reminisce 3. to act retroactively
- 接 jiē - 1. to pick up someone 今天晚上下班我来接你。(I' ll pick you up after work this evening.) 2. to answer; to continue talking 你倒是往下接啊! (What are you waiting for? Keep going.)
- 考 kǎo - to test oneself 这个你还真考不倒我! (I can answer this question!)
- 托 tuō - to hold in the palm 麻烦你过来帮我托一下, 好吗? (Can you come over here and hold this for me please?)
- 扇 shān - 1. to slap one' s face 我当时真想扇他一巴掌。(At that time I really wanted to slap him in the face.) 2. to fan 你能不能别扇了? 怪闹心的! (Can you please just stop using your fan for a sec? It' s so annoying!)
- 拍 pāi - 1. to take a photo of someone 别拍, 别拍, 我都不好意思了! (Please don' t take photo of me! I' m a bit shy!) 2. to pat 他走了过去, 拍了拍我。(He came over and gave me a pat on the shoulder.) 我的小狗喜欢我拍他。(My doggie likes it when I pat him.)
- 赶 gǎn - 1. to be equally matched 他的英语不赶你好。(His English is no match for yours.) 2. to push or force someone to leave 不用赶, 我自己会走! (You don' t have to kick me out, I' ll leave on my own accord!)
- 扯 chě - 1. to pull on; to yank; to tug 他扯了扯我的衣角。(He tugged at my clothes.) 2. to talk shit 别扯了。(Stop talking bullshit.)
- 缠 chán - 1. to coil 把绳子缠起来。(Wind up the rope.) 2. to tangle 线已缠在一起。(The thread is tangled.) 3. to entangle; to pester 别缠我。(Leave me alone.)
- 馋 chán - 1. to use food to tempt someone 别用羊肉串儿馋我。(Don' t use lamb shish kebabs to tempt me.) 2. to have a gluttonous craving 我馋了。(I wanna pig out.)